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MAR 25 1967

Reverberations On The Campus

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(EDITOR'S NOTE: The author of the following dispatch is editor of Moderator, the national magazine for college students. During the early days of the NSA-CIA revelations, he served as press officer for the National Student Assn.)

By PHILLIP R. WERDELL

WASHINGTON — The students and the spooks are no longer in the headlines although the shock waves caused by this particular explosion are still reverberating on campus.

THOUGHTFUL STUDENT leaders and editors are asking, "where do we go from here?" The tone of most campus editorials has been one of saddened outrage and frustration.

"If the Administration had tried its very best to totally alienate and to win the undying mistrust of a generation of youth, it could not have done a better job of it than to turn the National Student Association into the James Bond Finishing School," writes student Barry Kaplan of the University of Houston.

FOUR SUCCESSIVE presidents of the United States did approve the Central Intelligence Agency's link with the student organizations; surveys clearly show that rank-and-file students certainly did not.

Upon reflection, the student reaction is increasingly one of betrayal. The CIA infiltration of the large student organization is almost universally condemned on campus. Only after the National Supervisory Board made clear that the past NSA-CIA relationship would be completely revealed and the relationship completely terminated did campus support behind NSA begin to build.

THE FIRST REAL campus test came when Rick Stearns, NSA international affairs vice president spoke to a regional gathering of student government leaders from Minnesota and the Dakotas. The University of Minnesota Daily reported that he "was warmly applauded here Saturday after his talk at the NSA Minnesota-Dakotas regional conference. This was deserved, for he answered all questions, including a few embarrassing ones, in a frank manner."

The national staff of NSA in Washington has now contacted about 200 of its over 300 members. "No one seems to doubt the association's will to continue," reports Rose Ann Alderson, NSA's student government information service director. "There have only been disaffiliation plans starting on about 10 campuses that we have contacted so far, and this is not very unusual. A number of schools come in and out of the association every year."

AN INDEPENDENT newspaper survey of 40 NSA member schools in New York state revealed there was general support for the association but there were still some questions to be answered. "Was CIA money used for any domestic programs?" "How can we be certain that future officers will not re-establish the clandestine relationship?"

One campus, Anna Maria College in New England has disaffiliated. And Colorado State College and Swarthmore College have voted to withhold 1967-68 dues and suspend relations until further investigations assure that membership is worth-while and the NSA-CIA relationship is completely terminated.

ON THE OTHER side, the Michigan State University and the University of Denver have affiliated with NSA since the CIA disclosure. The University of Wisconsin and the University of Long Island, already member schools, have initiated fund-raising drives to help assure the independence of the association.

The major criticism of NSA comes from the student rightwing Young Americans for Freedom. Soon after the disclosure, they issued a statement condemning the liberal policies of NSA and its relationship with the CIA. But they were in a peculiar bind. For years, YAF had been rebaiting the association on campus. Suddenly, it is revealed that the CIA had been using NSA as a major arm in the Cold War to fight Communist youth and student activities.

A NUMBER of campus papers reported YAF members' claims that the "the CIA is Communist." The national leadership was a bit more sophisticated and humorous. They issued a statement that YAF would be willing to criticize American policy in Vietnam if the CIA would give them some money.

Yet the possibility is raised that the NSA-CIA debacle might strengthen the student organization on campus and abroad.

"THE MAIN REASON that NSA first accepted CIA funds," explains an editorial in The Brown and White of Lehigh University, "was that there was insufficient support from its members for carrying on necessary activities. If NSA fails, it will only be replaced by a weaker and less solvent group which would be ripe for monetary subversion by such a group as the CIA."

"The only way to ensure that there will be no repeat of the NSA-CIA affair is for NSA members to give strong support to the organization, making it adequately self-sufficient so that there will be no need to rely again upon outside influences for support."

The last word may be had by University of Colorado Daily editor, Bob Ewegan. In an editorial now being picked up by many campus papers Ewegan says, "Well, scratch one dream . . . Many names have been proposed for this generation. We are not the silent generation nor the lost. Perhaps we have been in search of a name. But now the student leaders of America know. We are the infiltrated generation. We are the kept generation. We are the preempted generation. The words coined jest at Berkeley, 'Don't trust anyone over 30,' come back to us now in earnest." (NEA)